



Building your child's resilience

As parents, you naturally want to protect your children from hard times, but all children will face challenges and setbacks. All kinds of experiences – a family break-up, an illness, moving to a new city, starting at a new early childhood education and care setting, or a traumatic event – can put your child's resilience to the test.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from negative or challenging experiences. We often think that children automatically bounce back, but this is not true. And while we can't always shelter children from tough times, we can help to build their resilience and ensure they have the skills and support to cope and adapt.

How can parents build their child's resilience?

Building resilience is about fostering safe and loving relationships and creating supportive, positive experiences to help your child grow and develop.

In addition to establishing a strong relationship with your child, you can help build resilience by:

- Showing your child that you care for them and will look after their needs.
- Acknowledging your child's feelings and skills; attending to your baby's needs and responding to his or her cries and noises.
- Smiling and offering praise when your child does things independently.
- Giving approval and encouragement for trying new things and for having a go.
- Giving your child easy-to-understand rules and consequences and explaining the rationale behind rules.
- Asking for and respecting his or her opinion.
- Giving your child lots of time to do things he or she is good at.
- Giving your child responsibilities at home.

Even when you and your family are under stress, it's important to remain positive with your child. This helps to reassure your child that you love and care for him or her.

Remember to talk with your child's early childhood educator about what is happening in your child's life. This will help educators be more alert to your child's needs, especially during times of stress. Similarly, your child's educators can be a great support helping you understand some of your child's behaviours. Together, parents, families and the community can build children's resilience and help them to grow up happy, healthy and able to cope with life's challenges.

This Parent Fact Sheet is available in different community languages and can be downloaded along with references from www.rch.org.au/cch

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